

## Capital Reading

# Here's Grist to Assess Dulles Influence on World

Reviewed by Chalmers M. Roberts

Mr. Roberts, National Bureau Chief of The Washington Post, was the diplomatic reporter during the Dulles years.

**DULLES ON DIPLOMACY.** By Andrew H. Berding.  
Van Nostrand. 184 pp. \$4.95.

FEW SECRETARIES OF STATE in American history have been as much admired and so strongly disliked as was John Foster Dulles, the strong-minded man of the Eisenhower era. To some, his brink-of-war posture plus his moralizing was intolerable; to others he was the strong man of the free world who almost singlehandedly held the dike against world communism.

A historic assessment of Dulles will be a long time coming. This book by Andrew Berding, a trained newsman who served Dulles as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, provides grist for that assessment—and for both views of Dulles.

The virtue of this book is that Berding took extensive shorthand notes of talks he and others had with Dulles. The vice of the book is that the notes are not, with few exceptions, dated or put into context. Some of the quotes quite obviously are of the after-the-fact variety, the purpose of which is to justify. To Berding's credit, though he certainly was pro-Dulles and fully loyal as an aide, he lets the Secretary speak for himself with nominal exceptions. Still, he cannot escape offering praise for Dulles's "great qualities of mind and character," a statement which will make him suspect to the Dulles detractors.

There are few surprises in the Dulles quotes: most are confirmations. He told Berding his greatest success was in what he called "peace through deterrence," his second achievement was "our policy toward the United Nations during the Suez crisis" and a third achievement was his own "knowledge of the Communist menace and putting this knowledge to use."

It was this latter which underlay just about everything else: a summit conference might "promote a false euphoria." Or "if our people

and Congress get the impression that disarmament is possible, they will insist on arms budget cuts which will impair our strength."

Then there is the Dulles-knows-best attitude. On adverse criticism: "The criticism is probably well-intentioned, but it's made by people who don't know as much about the problems as I do." And the Dulles gall: "... when I was in the Senate I made one of the principal arguments, if not the principal argument, in favor of the ratification of the NATO treaty."

Judgments: Khrushchev was more dangerous than Stalin because "Stalin was a calculating man" whereas Khrushchev was "excitable, irresponsible, prone to lose his temper." And: "I've never believed in the possibility of complete Titoism in Communist China. The Chinese are dependent on the Soviet Union. Their regime couldn't control China if it were not for Russia."

THERE ARE fragments of new information. As to Quemoy, Berding quotes Dulles as saying that "to me the defense of Quemoy is essential to the defense of Formosa" and Berding adds that he himself was convinced that "Dulles would not have hesitated for a split-second" to recommend use of Ameri-



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can forces to defend Quemoy. That is exactly what a lot of his opponents then feared he would do and why they fought to limit the language of the Formosa resolution in Congress.

As to Suez, Dulles said "Nasser knew in advance" the answer he would get on the Aswan dam project and that "Nasser therefore deliberately created a situation which would enable him to seize the canal." This sounds to me like an ex post facto judgment.

Berding does find one fault with Dulles. He states that Dulles at first "was inclined to pooh-pooh" those who warned when Sputnik first went up that it would bring great propaganda gains to Moscow.

The Dulles era is history but problems he dealt with, such as Indochina, live on. The best that can be said, in reading the Berding quotes, is that Dulles understood the Communists too well, that he took Lenin's words (which he kept at his bedside) too literally, that while he invoked American power to alter communism he did not fully appreciate the results of the interplay and that he was far too obsessed, after the manner of too many Secretaries of State, with a feeling that the public just didn't know what it was all about.